

Payne Shurvell

Lucy Wood / Vicini Lontani

Distant Neighbours.3: Lampedusa

9 September-16 October 2011 / Private View Thursday 8 September, 6-8pm



"Lucy Wood has done something extraordinary, using the artifacts of our era's greatest migratory tragedy to create a shockingly vivid artistic narrative." - Doug Saunders, author of *Arrival City*

PayneShurvell is pleased to present **Vicini Lontani/Distant Neighbours.3: Lampedusa**, an exhibition by Lucy Wood.

According to Italy's Interior minister, this year nearly 20,000 North African migrants have come ashore in the tiny Italian island of Lampedusa or the 'port to Europe' as the migrants call it. Lucy Wood's new show documents the migrant's journey across unmapped territory between two politically opposite landscapes - North Africa and Lampedusa, a tiny island with only 5,300 local inhabitants whose waters are littered with empty North African fishing boats.

During the past two years, Wood has regularly travelled to Lampedusa to collect and document migrant material through interviews, photography and found objects. Wood has just spent two months on Lampedusa (during a massive rescue in Lampedusa Harbour, and the recent horrific deaths of 25 men) researching this exhibition.

This exhibition marks the third chapter of 'Distant Neighbours', a series of exploratory shows in relation to migration routes around the world. Wood's work is based on issues dealing with social, political and environmental entrapment. She has recently focused on migration, building a series of exhibitions surrounding issues of global migration.

On 8 May 2011 at 1.30am local time, a migrant boat arrived in the harbour at Lampedusa with engine failure. The Coast Guard and Guardia di Finanza were guiding the boat in when its rudder broke and it ended up on the rocks at the harbour's entrance. Many migrants in a state of fear jumped into the water, often throwing their children in hoping the rescuers would get to them first. A massive rescue effort was launched. The local people involved in the rescue recall their individual effort and role in the rescue. Over five hundred people were saved and three died. Many involved in the rescue spent over twelve hours saving lives. The migrants were from Libya, Tunisia, Somalia and Eritrea.

The exhibition will consist of an installation of a series of 'ghost' boats, an abstraction of the 'Boat Graveyard' (an area on the harbour side in Lampedusa where the migrant boats are stored whilst waiting to be destroyed) as well as a series of video works and recent sculptural work.

The first two 'chapters' of *Distant Neighbours* were shown at Upstream Gallery, Amsterdam. *Vecinos Distantes / Distant Neighbours.1* (2009) documented the migration of Mexicans and Central Americans from Mexico to Arizona USA.

About the artist and PayneShurvell gallery:

Lucy Wood is represented by Upstream Gallery, Amsterdam. Her recent exhibitions include *Vicini Lontani/Distant Neighbours 2* and *Vecinos Distantes 1* at Upstream (2011, 2008), *A Bright and Guilty Place* (PayneShurvell, 2010), and *You First* (Five Years Gallery, 2007). Her work has been shown at various art fairs including, the London Art Fair, Art Brussels, Zoo Art Fair and Liste, Basel and is in the Arts Council Collection UK and private collections in The Netherlands, Italy, New Zealand and the UK.

PayneShurvell opened in Shoreditch in June 2010 and is run by James Payne and Joanne Shurvell. James Payne, a Fine Art graduate of Central St Martins, is a curator and film editor of *Garageland* magazine. Joanne Shurvell, a former Communications Director at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, is a freelance arts writer and marketing consultant. PayneShurvell aims to bridge the gap between an artist-run space and a commercial gallery, showcasing emerging UK and international artists and featuring work from all media.

Lucy Wood /Vicini Lontani/Distant Neighbors.3/ 9 Sept-16 Oct 2011 (Private View Thursday 8 September 6-8pm) / 16 Hewett Street, London UK EC2A 3NN / Tel: **+44 (0) 20 0011 4115** / Open: Wednesday-Saturday 11am–6pm and by appointment / **www.payneshurvell.com**

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Notes to editors:

Families often sell their valuable possessions to send their brightest child to Europe. The people traffickers' fee can be as much as €2,000 (£1,800). Human beings adrift at sea are not toxic cargo. From time immemorial, human instinct has been to save lives endangered at sea. Instead, today, on the assumption that boats in distress carry migrants and refugees, other ships pass them by, ignoring their pleas for help.

Government disregard of international duties represents only part of the problem. There is no doubt that ruthless people smugglers bear much of the blame for the thousands of deaths that occur each year in the Mediterranean, the Gulf of Aden, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and elsewhere. The disincentives for responsible behaviour became paradoxically clear when fishermen who helped seafarers in distress were made to face criminal charges, rather than receive praise for saving lives and fulfilling a duty clearly spelled out in international law and common humanity.